

(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36

~~SECRET SPOKE~~

CATEGORY = 4

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~~SECRET SPOKE~~ 2/00/VCK/R-1112-72 SPOT REPORT FOLLOW-UP NR 2 AND FINAL TO 21/VCK/R184-72 171120Z OCT AUN/OPER-V/I,Z NVN SAM COMMUNICATIONS REFLECT PROBABLE CRASH OF F-111 CONVERSATIONS ON 17 OCTOBER BETWEEN PERSONNEL OF AT LEAST ONE NORTH VIETNAMESE SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE REGIMENT REFERENCED THE CRASH OF A U.S. AIRCRAFT IN THE VICINITY OF THANH BA (21-27N 105-06E), AND THE DOWNING OF AN F-111. ALTHOUGH NEITHER THE EXACT TIME OF THE CRASH NOR THE TYPE OF AIRCRAFT WAS REVEALED IN THE CONVERSATIONS, THE REFERENCES MOST PROBABLY EQUATE TO THE F-111 LOST TO UNKNOWN CAUSES DURING THE EARLY 1700Z HOUR ON 16 OCTOBER (17 OCTOBER NVN TIME) WHILE CONDUCTING A STRIKE AGAINST THE DAI LOI RAILWAY BRIDGE (21-25N 105-42E). AT 0459Z ON 17 OCTOBER, AN OPERATOR AT AN UNIDENTIFIED SAM BATTALION NORTHWEST OF HANOI WAS ASKED BY THE PROBABLE REGIMENTAL CONTROLLER IF AN AIRCRAFT HAD GONE DOWN NEAR THE BATTALION. THE BATTALION OPERATOR REPLIED, \$YES, WE HAD ONE GO DOWN IN THE AREA OF THANH BA.\$ THIS OPERATOR WAS THEN INSTRUCTED TO \$... DETERMINE THE EXACT POINT AND GO OUT TO PICK UP THE WRECKAGE.\$ THE RESPONSE INDICATED THAT THESE STEPS HAD ALREADY BEEN INITIATED. AT 0506Z ON THE 17TH, THE CONTROLLER MADE A STATEMENT TO A POSSIBLE DIVISION LEVEL CONTROLLER INDICATING THAT THE DOWNED AIRCRAFT WAS INITIALLY BELIEVED TO BE A DRONE. HE THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT \$THANH BA REPORTED THE SOUND OF AN EXPLOSION AND THAT THERE WAS SMOKE AND FIRE RISING.\$ AT 0736Z, ADDITIONAL CONVERSATION DISCLOSED THAT ANOTHER BATTALION OF THE SAME SAM REGIMENT MAY HAVE ACTUALLY WITNESSED THE AIRCRAFT CRASH. THE BATTALION REPORTED THAT, \$WE HAD AN AIRCRAFT THAT APPEARED IN SIGHT AND WAS GOING DOWN-- CRASHING THERE. THERE WAS THE SOUND OF A LOUD EXPLOSION AND AFTER THAT THERE WAS A COLUMN OF SMOKE AND A FIREBALL THAT ROSE UP. WE HAD THE ABILITY TO SEE THAT.\$ LATER ON IN THE DAY, AT 1405Z, ANOTHER CONVERSATION REFERRED TO U.S. AIRSTRIKES THAT HAD BEEN CONDUCTED EARLIER IN THE YEN BAI AREA AND THE DOWNING OF AN F-111. IT WAS REPORTED THAT A \$DRONE WAS DOWNED AND ALSO AN F-111.\$ SOME CONFUSION AS TO THE TYPE OF AIRCRAFT DOWNED APPARENTLY STILL EXISTED WHEN IT WAS REPORTED THAT \$... IT ISN'T/WASH'T CLEAR IF IT ((THE AIRCRAFT)) WAS AN F4.\$ IN ADDITION TO THAT AIR SURVEILLANCE TRACKING OF A POSSIBLE F-111 IN THE AREA WEST OF HANOI DEPICTED EARLIER ((1)), A SECOND AIR SURVEILLANCE RAID WAS NOTED IN THAT AREA, AS FOLLOWS, (READ ZULU TIME, COORDINATES) 1657 21-08N 104-10E 1658 21-18N 104-10E 1709 21-48N 104-50E 1715 21-18N 104-43E 1718 21-05N 104-30E 1730 20-38N 104-03E 1731 20-12N 103-50E 1733 19-48N 103-20E NEITHER OF THOSE AIR SURVEILLANCE RAIDS TERMINATED OR PASSED NEAR THE COMINT-REPORTED SHOOT DOWN SITE OF THANH BA. SUBSEQUENT REVIEW OF ALL AIR SURVEILLANCE TRACKING FOR THE LATE 1600- EARLY 1700 ZULU HOUR ALSO REFLECTED THREE OTHER \$HOSTILE\$ RAIDS, NONE OF WHICH ENTERED THE AREA EAST OF 104-30E, AND ALL EXITED NVN AIRSPACE IN THE FAR WESTERN REGION. COMMENTS, NORTH VIETNAMESE PRESS RELEASES REPORT THAT AN F-111 WAS SHOT DOWN BY AAA FIRE IN VINH PHUC PROVINCE, NORTHWEST OF HANOI ON 17 OCTOBER. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS ACCOUNTS, THE AIRCRAFT \$BLEW UP IN AN EARTH-SHAKING EXPLOSION . . . . THE BLAZE WAS SO INTENSE THAT IT ILLUMINATED THE

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VILLAGE. \$ IT WAS FURTHER REPORTED THAT SOME OF THE AIRCRAFT WRECKAGE HAD FALLEN ON THE BANKS OF THE \$CA LO RIVER, \$ AN ALTERNATE NAME FOR THE RED RIVER. THANH BA IS ALSO ON THE BANKS OF THE RED RIVER. IN VIEW OF THOSE SAM COMMUNICATIONS DISCUSSED ABOVE AND THE NVN PRESS, IT IS BELIEVED THAT NEITHER OF THE TRACKS DEPICTED REFLECT THAT F-111 REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN LOST ON 16 OCTOBER. OPERATIONAL SOURCES REPORT THAT NO DRONES WERE LOST ON EITHER 16 OR 17 OCTOBER. ((1)). 2/00/VCK/R1101-72, 180559Z OCT SPOT FOLLOW UP NR. ONE TO 2/ VCK/R184-72, 171120Z 23 MSGMSG070293138004750 NONE NONE #OCT. 800 #0798 HNNN

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